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United for Quality Care

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SEIU 1199NE  
Bonnie Gaudreau  
Killingly, CT

Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Afternoon Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, and members of the Appropriations Human Services Subcommittee. My name is Bonnie Gaudreau and I am a Charge Nurse at Davis Place in Danielson. I come before you today to ask you to properly fund nursing homes like mine.

I have worked at Davis Place for the past 32 years. I have never seen staffing issues as bad as they have been the past few years. Even with the new staffing standard which was set in 2021 the ratio of residents to caregivers is unsustainable. Nursing homes are no longer just for the elderly. We admit a span of many age groups with much more complex, acute, behavioral/ psychiatric, bariatric issues.

I often question why I became a Nurse, as I feel inadequate most shifts. I am not able to provide the kind of care these residents deserve to receive, due to short staffing. Imagine coming into work on day shift with 34 residents: 6 are at high risk for falls, 2 are actively dying on Hospice, 7 have Dementia with behavioral disturbances, 2 are constantly exit seeking, and 4 are bariatric (which requires minimum 2-4 staff to reposition/roll in bed). Only 2 of my patients are independent, and the rest have advanced Alzheimer's and are in need of total care. Now try working with only 2 CNAs. How are we to adequately provide care for all these human beings?

As the Charge Nurse for 34 residents, I have to complete: 7 blood sugars before breakfast comes out and start my morning med pass - which takes a minimum of 2.5 hours to complete, if no interruptions. As I am popping the medications - I hear my name paged overhead for a phone call so I go answer it, Family members of residents approach my cart asking for assistance so I go assist, I hear a resident yelling for "HELP!" in their bedroom so I go running to help, I see a high risk fall resident attempting to stand unassisted while the CNAs are in rooms assisting other residents so I go run to catch the falling resident and yell for help myself, I have to check on the Hospice actively dying residents every hour, recheck all the blood sugars before lunch, start my afternoon med pass, and complete all the required charting. All of this in an 8 hour shift. Could you do all this? We are constantly faced with ethical dilemmas daily.

Residents and caregivers need you to fully fund our nursing homes. Fund bills like SB 989, which will raise staffing standards in nursing homes and improve care. By making these critical investments, we can ensure that nursing homes are staffed properly and

improve the quality of life for the residents. Please help us.

Thank you for your time.